United Nations S/2003/1175

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 December 2003

Original: English

First progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1509 (2003) of 19 September 2003, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for a period of 12 months and requested me to transfer authority from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) to UNMIL on 1 October 2003. The Council further requested me to report every 90 days on the implementation of the mandate of UNMIL. As set out in resolution 1509 (2003), the Mission's mandate covers the following broad areas: supporting the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement signed by the Liberian parties on 17 June 2003; providing support for security sector reform; facilitating humanitarian and human rights assistance; and supporting the implementation of the peace process. The present report describes the progress made in the deployment of UNMIL and in the implementation of its mandate.

II. Deployment of the Mission

2. UNMIL took over peacekeeping responsibilities from ECOMIL on 1 October, as stipulated in Security Council resolution 1509 (2003). All of the approximately 3,600 ECOMIL troops, comprising contingents from Benin, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo, were reassigned to UNMIL as United Nations peacekeepers. The newly designated UNMIL troops remained in the deployment areas established by ECOMIL in Monrovia, as well as on the main roads leading into the city and along the Kakata-Totota and Monrovia-Buchanan roads. Shortly after UNMIL took over from ECOMIL, the United States of America withdrew the significant military capabilities it had positioned off the coast of Liberia in August to support the ECOMIL forces.

3. In accordance with the concept of operations of the Mission, UNMIL troops will be deployed throughout Liberia in four sectors (see map). Each sector will comprise a brigade-strength unit with full combat engineer and medical support elements. Sector 1 will cover Monrovia as well as Montserrado and Margibi Counties. The Sector 1 headquarters has already been established. Sector 2 will comprise the counties of Bomi, Grand Cape Mount and Lofa. This sector covers the sensitive areas along Liberia's borders with Sierra Leone and Guinea. Sector 3 will

03-65330 (E) 171203

consist of Grand Bassa and Bong counties, as well as the northern part of Nimba County, bordering Côte d'Ivoire. Sector 4 will cover the counties of Sinoe, River Cess, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru and Maryland, which include the volatile areas along the border with Côte d'Ivoire.

4. Following the transfer of a Bangladeshi battalion from the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to UNMIL on 10 October, UNMIL was able to expand its influence beyond Monrovia by launching patrols to Nimba County, where fighting between the armed groups continued, as well as to Bong and River Cess Counties, and to open the road from Totota to Saniquellie. The deployment of the Bangladeshi battalion also enabled UNMIL to provide effective security for the inauguration of the National Transitional Government of Liberia on 14 October.

5. During the month of November, UNMIL focused on preparations for deployment into the interior. To that end reconnaissance teams visited the areas earmarked for the Sector headquarters and the Mission received enabling units from Bangladesh (engineering unit and level 2 hospital), Ireland (special forces and quick reaction force reserve), Jordan (level 3 hospital), Nepal (military police unit), the Netherlands (combat support ship with level 3 hospital), Pakistan (road and airfield engineering unit), and the Philippines (force headquarters administration unit). In December, UNMIL will begin establishing the remaining three Sector headquarters with the deployment of units from Pakistan (to Sector 2 headquarters in Tubmanburg), Bangladesh (to Sector 3 headquarters in Gbarnga), and Ethiopia (to Sector 4 headquarters in Zwedru). In addition, infantry battalions from Bangladesh and Ethiopia, as well as specialized units from Bangladesh, China and Pakistan, are scheduled to arrive in the Mission area by the end of December.

6. As at 12 December, the UNMIL troop strength stood at 5,900 military personnel. More contingents from Bangladesh, Namibia, Pakistan, Sweden and Ukraine, as well as military observers from various Member States, are scheduled to arrive in the Mission area in January and February 2004. It is expected that full deployment of the Mission will be achieved by the end of February 2004.

7. All in all, the process of generating troops for UNMIL has not been completely satisfactory. Member States have not been forthcoming with offers of sorely needed specialized units, in particular attack helicopters and signals units. Some Member States have requested changes in the timelines for the deployment of their troops, while others have withdrawn offers of troops after conducting reconnaissance missions to Liberia. In addition, one Member State was initially unable to obtain the approval of its legislature to deploy the specialized units it had offered for UNMIL. Furthermore, a number of other Member States have offered troops that are not adequately equipped. All these factors have resulted in slippages in the Mission's deployment schedule, which will have an adverse impact on the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme and other key aspects of the overall peace process. Moreover, they have hampered the Mission's efforts to deploy beyond Monrovia and stabilize the volatile situation that prevails in the interior.

8. Considering the tight deadline set by the Security Council in resolution 1509 (2003) for the transfer from ECOMIL to UNMIL, stopgap arrangements had to be made for setting up the UNMIL force headquarters. An interim force headquarters, comprising mainly military personnel from the Standby High-Readiness Brigade, was deployed in Monrovia until the permanent force headquarters became

operational on 1 November. The personnel for the permanent headquarters underwent training at the UNAMSIL headquarters in Freetown from 1 to 20 October.

III. Implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement

9. The ceasefire was holding in Monrovia until 7 December, when there were riots by former government soldiers and militias at the launching of the disarmament and demobilization exercise at the cantonment site at Camp Scheiffelin, just outside the city. A very high number of combatants presented themselves for disarmament and overwhelmed the facilities. There were also misunderstandings among the combatants about the benefits they were to receive. As a result, there were disturbances at the cantonment site and in the city from 7 to 9 December, during which there were incidents of shooting and looting by the combatants. One United Nations peacekeeper was wounded, and an unconfirmed number of civilian deaths were reported during the disturbances.

10. Earlier, there was another serious violation of the ceasefire, which occurred in the capital on 1 October — the day of the handover from ECOMIL to UNMIL. Shooting broke out between the main armed factions of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and government forces on the outskirts of the city as Sekou Conneh, leader of LURD, travelled to Monrovia for his first meeting with the interim President, Moses Blah. Apparently, the fighting occurred because of the presence of armed elements in Mr. Conneh's convoy of some 40 to 50 vehicles. There was neither consultation nor coordination with UNMIL on the arrangements for the visit. The newly assigned UNMIL troops quickly brought the situation under control.

11. In related incidents, shortly after the shootout, LURD elements seized vehicles from humanitarian workers in Monrovia and on the Monrovia-Bomi road. There were also incidents of rape and looting by unidentified armed elements in areas on the outskirts of Monrovia on the night following the shootout. UNMIL stepped up security measures in Monrovia through robust patrols and vehicle searches, and the situation in the city and its environs has remained relatively calm since those incidents. Although the Joint Monitoring Committee has declared Monrovia a weapon-free zone, the prevailing calm can be expected to remain tenuous until the armed groups are fully disarmed.

12. Beyond Monrovia and the areas to which UNMIL has deployed so far, the security situation remains volatile, and there is sporadic fighting, particularly in areas of Nimba, Grand Bassa and Bong Counties. Apart from the fighting, other ceasefire violations recorded in those areas consist of harassment of the civilian population and interference by the armed groups with the freedom of movement of UNMIL, ECOWAS and humanitarian personnel.

13. Fighting was also reported between LURD and former government forces in Gbarnga, Bong County, on 13 October. The Force Commander of UNMIL, Lieutenant General Daniel Opande, travelled to the area and convinced the two sides to move back to their previous positions. There were also separate incidents of fighting between the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and former government forces in the Sagleipie, Tapeta and Gloie areas in Nimba County from 2 to 7 November, which resulted in the displacement of more than 30,000 civilians.

Although UNMIL was able to restore an uneasy calm in those areas, the Mission continues to receive reports of harassment of civilians by the armed groups there.

14. On 13 November, clashes were reported between MODEL and former government forces in areas of Grand Bassa County, between Robertsfield Airport and Buchanan. Incidents of looting by LURD combatants were reported in Bensonville, Montserrado County, on 15 November. A few days later, UNMIL forced LURD combatants to dismantle a checkpoint at Arlington, where they were harassing civilians.

15. On several occasions, LURD commanders and combatants interfered with the movement of UNMIL, ECOWAS and humanitarian personnel. On 26 October, LURD officials denied a Namibian reconnaissance team access to Tubmanburg, and the team had to resort to conducting the reconnaissance by air. In another incident, LURD combatants similarly prevented part of a Pakistani reconnaissance team from entering the town, while two UNMIL patrols were stopped from travelling to Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County. On 30 October, LURD fighters in Gbarnga denied passage to a group of displaced civilians who were travelling to Monrovia from Ganta, Nimba County. Early in November, LURD combatants also prevented a delegation comprising the Ambassadors of Ghana and Nigeria and the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS from travelling to Tubmanburg to meet with the LURD leader, Sekou Conneh.

16. The air and ground patrols conducted by UNMIL to the areas affected by the clashes between the combatants, as well as the liaison established with the commanders of the armed groups and the ongoing dialogue within the framework of the Joint Monitoring Committee, have yielded some desired results in separating the belligerent parties in some cases. Until UNMIL receives sufficient troops to deploy to those areas, however, sporadic fighting, looting, harassment of civilians and interference with the Mission's patrols to the interior of Liberia can be expected to continue.

IV. Joint Monitoring Committee

17. The Joint Monitoring Committee has been a valuable mechanism for monitoring the ceasefire, maintaining dialogue among the armed groups, and facilitating contacts between UNMIL and the ground commanders of those groups. The Committee has played a key role in the efforts to end the sporadic fighting in the interior of the country. The Committee comprises senior military representatives of MODEL, LURD and former government forces and is chaired by the Force Commander of UNMIL.

18. Since UNMIL took over from ECOMIL, the Joint Monitoring Committee has been meeting on a weekly basis. At the first meeting convened by UNMIL on 6 October, the armed groups agreed to declare Monrovia and key areas on the outskirts of the city a "weapon-free zone". Pursuant to that decision, the then interim President, Moses Blah, handed over to UNMIL several tons of arms and ammunition belonging to the former government forces deployed at the Executive Mansion and at his residence. UNMIL also collected 22 tons of arms and ammunition that had been illegally imported by former President Charles Taylor but were seized by ECOMIL at Robertsfield Airport. In addition, some 800 militia personnel loyal to former President Taylor voluntarily handed over their weapons to the Mission.

UNMIL continues to conduct cordon-and-search operations in the city and its outskirts. So far, these operations have yielded a significant number of weapons and ammunition.

19. The Joint Monitoring Committee is also seized with the issue of prisoners of war and abductees held by the armed groups. In this connection, on 29 October, MODEL agreed to release 28 war detainees held in Zwedru into the custody of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). However, LURD and the former government forces claim that they are not holding any detainees or abductees.

20. In preparation for the cantonment and disarmament of combatants, the Joint Monitoring Committee is collecting information from the armed groups on the numbers and location of their forces. So far, the former government forces have submitted information on their structure and a nominal list of their troops numbering approximately 12,000. They have indicated that the collection of information on their troops in outlying areas is ongoing. LURD and MODEL have provided only basic organizational data but have not submitted the critical list of their combatants, which is needed to facilitate preparations for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme.

V. Preparations for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation

21. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 1509 (2003), the Security Council requested UNMIL, inter alia, to assist in the development of cantonment sites, prepare an action plan for the overall implementation of a disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, and carry out voluntary disarmament of the armed groups. To that end, a task force comprising key stakeholders, including UNMIL, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and an international non-governmental organization, World Vision, completed the elaboration of an action plan for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation on schedule on 19 October.

22. As currently projected in the action plan, the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme will target an estimated 40,000 combatants. However, the armed groups subsequently provided estimates ranging from 45,000 to 60,000. UNMIL believes that those estimates may be inflated, but will nevertheless continue to review them.

23. The initial phase of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, which commenced on 7 December, will target 1,000 combatants from each of the three armed factions. At their respective cantonment sites, the 1,000 combatants will be divided into groups of 250 to go through the various steps of the process, including handing over weapons, which will be destroyed in situ, receiving basic orientation, and undergoing interviews for reintegration. Each group of ex-combatants is expected to stay at the cantonment site for three weeks. Before they are discharged, the former combatants will each receive an initial stipend to cover

their resettlement expenses. They will then be transported to their respective resettlement areas where they will be placed in interim reintegration projects for a period of three months, pending commencement of the long-term reintegration programme. Upon completion of these stopgap reintegration activities, the ex-combatants will receive a second stipend. The National Transitional Government and its development partners will provide long-term reintegration projects.

24. The disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation action plan includes special arrangements for child and female combatants. The child soldiers will be separated from adult combatants and placed in interim care centres managed by specialized protection agencies, including United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. The child soldiers will remain in the cantonment sites for processing for only 72 hours. Their separate reintegration activities will include special counselling and educational programmes. A tracking system to monitor former child combatants during and after reintegration is being devised by child protection agencies.

25. Similarly, female combatants will be placed in separate interim care centres in the cantonment sites, where they will receive special assistance in such areas as reproductive health, counselling, training on women's rights and sexual trauma support. Their reintegration activities will also include educational programmes.

26. A subregional approach which takes into account the presence of foreign combatants in Liberia, as well as former and active Liberian combatants in neighbouring countries, will be essential. UNMIL is working jointly with UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to devise arrangements for the repatriation of these combatants. In addition, this matter was discussed during the coordination meeting held in Freetown on 14 November, attended by UNMIL, UNAMSIL, the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) and the United Nations Office for West Africa. Furthermore, during his visit to Freetown on 6 November, which was facilitated by UNMIL, the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, Charles Gyude Bryant, discussed with the President of Sierra Leone, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the arrangements for the repatriation of both the Sierra Leonean combatants from Liberia and combatants from LURD and the Armed Forces of Liberia who had sought refuge in Sierra Leone. UNHCR, in collaboration with ICRC, will provide assistance in the processing and cross-border repatriation of former Liberian combatants who sought refuge in third countries.

27. The necessary mechanisms have been established to facilitate effective coordination among all partners involved in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. These include a National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation co-chaired by Chairman Bryant and my Special Representative, Jacques Paul Klein, which oversees the whole programme and makes policy decisions. As stipulated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by the Liberian parties in Accra on 18 August 2003, the Commission comprises representatives of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, leaders of the three armed groups, UNMIL, ECOWAS and the International Contact Group on Liberia.

28. At the inaugural meeting of the Commission on 27 November, representatives of MODEL, LURD and the former government forces banded together to allege

"serious violations" of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement by the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia and demanded that the commencement of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme be postponed until posts in the government and public corporations had been distributed "properly". My Special Representative, as well as the representatives of ECOWAS and the International Contact Group, have all unequivocally reaffirmed that there is no linkage between the disarmament of combatants and the allocation of posts in the National Transitional Government of Liberia. Nonetheless, the National Transitional Government and UNMIL successfully launched the programme at a symbolic ceremony on 1 December, during which some weapons voluntarily surrendered by former government militias were destroyed.

29. A Joint Implementation Unit, comprising personnel from UNMIL, the United Nations country team and other partners, has been established to coordinate the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process on the ground. The main tasks assigned to UNMIL in the entire programme range from a central coordination role, mobilization of the requisite resources, collection of information on combatants, preparing the cantonment sites, providing perimeter security at the cantonment sites, collecting and destroying weapons, and demobilizing the combatants. While cantonment facilities for the former government forces have been established at Camp Scheiffelin, the facilities for the LURD and MODEL combatants at the designated sites in Tubmanburg and Buchanan have yet to be prepared. The cantonment of combatants in those areas will begin once UNMIL deploys its troops to those two locations. Regrettably, as indicated in paragraph 9 above, the launching of the initial phase of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation was marred by riots.

VI. Support for security reform

30. In subparagraphs 3 (n) and (o) of its resolution 1509 (2003), the Security Council requested UNMIL to assist the National Transitional Government in monitoring and restructuring the police force of Liberia, to develop a civilian police training programme and to assist in the training of the civilian police, in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations and interested States; and to assist the Transitional Government in the formation of a new and restructured Liberian military, also in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations, and interested States.

31. With regard to support for the restructuring and training of the Liberian National Police and providing assistance in the maintenance of law and order, UNMIL and the Secretariat have developed a concept of operations that envisages the deployment of 755 civilian police personnel and three formed police units, each comprising 120 armed police personnel. The main tasks of the three formed units will include assisting the Liberian National Police in performing its law enforcement tasks, including crowd control. Two of the formed units will be deployed in Monrovia. The location of the third will be determined according to the outcome of the ongoing assessment of the situation in other parts of the country.

32. The civilian police officers will be responsible for conducting an assessment of Liberia's law enforcement system and its overall structure, as well as developing and implementing a programme for the restructuring of the Liberian National Police.

Teams of civilian police officers will be deployed in all four sectors of UNMIL and at the Mission's headquarters in Monrovia.

33. Currently, there are 35 civilian police officers and one formed police unit from Jordan on the ground. A total of 80 officers are scheduled to be deployed by the end of the year. Additional civilian police personnel will be deployed progressively, as dictated by training needs and the Mission's operational requirements. Full deployment of the Mission's police component is expected to be attained by June 2004. The activities of the civilian police officers include the development of mechanisms for screening the national police personnel who will be included in the interim national police service as part of the restoration of core police functions, pending the restructuring and training of the force. To that end, a nucleus of the interim police force, comprising 20 police officers, has already received "fast track" training by UNMIL.

34. A Military Advisory Committee made up of the Chiefs of Staff of the former government forces, LURD and MODEL has been established and charged with developing proposals for the reform and restructuring of Liberia's armed forces. UNMIL and some members of the International Contact Group are expected to provide logistical support and advice to the Committee. The Committee's recommendations will be considered by the National Transitional Government before they are submitted to UNMIL and other interested international partners. UNMIL has also initiated consultations with representatives of interested States on this important matter.

VII. Implementation of the peace process

35. A key aspect of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is the establishment of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, which was inaugurated on 14 October. The signatory parties to the Peace Agreement have submitted nominations for the 22 Cabinet posts allocated to them under the Agreement. However, Chairman Bryant rejected the nominations arbitrarily made by LURD for the posts of Deputy Governor of the Central Bank, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia and Head of the Customs and Excise Department. This resulted in a first significant political crisis when LURD threatened to pull out of the peace process and to refuse access by UNMIL to areas under its control.

36. Although the tensions were defused following a series of meetings convened by UNMIL at that time, on 27 November the three armed groups renewed their demands for more senior government posts, as indicated in paragraph 35 above. It was in this prevailing climate of palpable tension that the Implementation Monitoring Committee held its first meeting on 28 November. The Committee is chaired jointly by UNMIL and ECOWAS, and comprises representatives of the African Union, the European Union and the International Contact Group. At its first meeting, the Committee condemned the attempt by the armed groups to make the attainment of government posts a precondition for their participation in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. It also requested the Joint Monitoring Committee to recommend appropriate measures to be taken against parties responsible for continuing violations of the Ceasefire Agreement, adding that those responsible for infractions of international humanitarian law would eventually be held accountable for their crimes.

37. The National Transitional Legislative Assembly has also begun its work. After electing its principal officers and establishing its committees, the Assembly held confirmation hearings and has so far approved a total of 15 nominees for Cabinet and other senior positions in the Transitional Government. However, 9 seats in the 67-member Assembly have yet to be filled. These include two from the political parties, who have not yet reached a consensus on the candidates, and seven from the counties, whose nominations were nullified by the ECOWAS Mediator, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, because the candidates had been selected in Monrovia rather than the counties.

38. In order to assist the Transitional Government in re-establishing national authority throughout the country, including the establishment of a functioning administrative structure, UNMIL has set up a civil affairs component, which is currently conducting an assessment of the functional capacities of government ministries and other public administration structures. The preliminary findings of the assessment indicate that of the 22 ministries surveyed, only the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence have been working in an uninterrupted manner since August 2003 when the fighting in Monrovia ended. All the other ministries were either partially functioning or had closed down completely as a result of the looting during the fighting and the non-payment of salaries to civil servants. To address these challenges, UNMIL and the United Nations country team are working with the National Transitional Government to assess the priority needs for the restoration of basic infrastructure, which will be presented at the donors' conference on Liberia that is expected to be held early in February 2004.

39. At the same time, and in order to more comprehensively address rule of law issues, the UNMIL concept of operations envisages the setting up of judicial and corrections components within the Mission's structure. The judicial component will include training, advisory and court monitoring programmes to be developed with strong national and international partnerships. Similarly, the corrections component will include training/mentoring, advisory and monitoring programmes. The first group of staff members for both components is scheduled to be deployed in January 2004.

40. With regard to assisting the National Transitional Government of Liberia in restoring proper management of the country's natural resources, UNMIL intends to consult with the Government and other stakeholders on how best the Mission could support it in developing a strategy and setting up mechanisms for monitoring and controlling the exploitation of those resources. In addition, the Mission will also assist the Transitional Government in devising mechanisms for ensuring accountability and transparency in the collection and disbursement of revenues accruing from the exploitation of natural resources.

41. Concerning elections, the Security Council requested UNMIL to assist the National Transitional Government of Liberia, in conjunction with other international partners, in preparing for national elections to be held no later than the end of 2005. The nature of UNMIL electoral assistance will be defined after consultation with a reconstituted National Elections Commission, which, under the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, should have been appointed by the Chairman of the Transitional Government by 18 November 2003. As soon as the Commission is established, the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division will dispatch a needs

assessment mission to Liberia to determine the role the United Nations could play in supporting the elections.

42. The Mission's public information component is playing a key role in promoting the peace process by supporting the Transitional Government and communicating key messages to the people. UNMIL Radio began live broadcasting on the first day of the Mission and covered the inauguration of the National Transitional Government. The Mission is implementing a public information strategy to provide information on the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme to the general public and to combatants. The strategy utilizes radio programming, including interviews, public service announcements, community sensitization through drama and comedy performances, and media awareness through regular press briefings and training workshops. The media of Liberia seem buoyed by the policies of the Transitional Government, which has lifted a ban on a popular pro-democracy radio station, Star Radio, owned by the Swiss-based Hirondelle Foundation, which had been closed down by the government of former President Charles Taylor in 2000.

43. Both the Transitional Government and UNMIL are already taking steps to address the regional dimensions of the conflict in Liberia. UNMIL is working in coordination with UNAMSIL, MINUCI and the United Nations Office for West Africa to devise mechanisms for addressing cross-cutting issues, such as cross-border infiltration by combatants, the use of mercenaries, the circulation of small arms and the repatriation of foreign combatants. It has been agreed that the Force Commanders of UNMIL and UNAMSIL, together with the Chief Military Liaison Officer from MINUCI, will meet on a regular basis to share information and coordinate measures to tackle these issues. For its part, the Transitional Government has initiated a dialogue with neighbouring countries aimed at rebuilding confidence and re-establishing good-neighbourly relations.

VIII. Humanitarian assistance

44. The humanitarian situation in Monrovia is gradually improving. Humanitarian agencies have made some progress in delivering relief assistance to vulnerable groups and communities in and around the capital, where up to 300,000 internally displaced persons were concentrated following the fighting in June and July 2003. However, the delivery of assistance to communities beyond Monrovia and other urban areas continues to be seriously hampered by lack of access to most parts of the country.

45. These constraints notwithstanding, since August, United Nations agencies and their partners have delivered food assistance to about 380,000 beneficiaries on average per distribution cycle, and to 60,000 children for two months; helped to reduce cholera cases and prevent fatalities through mass chlorination of open wells, benefiting 400,000 people; carried out measles vaccination for more than 600,000 children between the ages of 6 months and 15 years; supported basic health-care services in accessible areas; supported supplementary and therapeutic feeding of severely malnourished children; provided protection and non-food assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees; and assisted in the repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees.

46. On 3 November, Chairman Bryant launched a "Back to school" campaign initiated by UNICEF with the support of the United Nations country team, UNMIL, and other programme partners. This project, which is intended to revitalize the education system in Liberia, will provide basic supplies to 750,000 children, their teachers and schools.

47. UNMIL is also supporting the efforts of the humanitarian community through implementation of a host of quick-impact projects to improve sanitation, rehabilitate schools, and repair roads so as to address the immediate infrastructure needs in and around Monrovia. As conditions of access improve, these activities will be extended progressively throughout the country.

48. The humanitarian agencies are intensifying negotiations with the armed groups for access to communities outside Monrovia. By the end of November, humanitarian agencies, with the assistance of UNMIL, had conducted some 50 assessment missions covering major towns in all 15 counties, including Lofa County, which had been unreachable for four years. These rapid assessments were often accompanied by emergency relief supplies to affected populations.

49. The assessments confirmed reports of massive destruction and vandalizing of physical infrastructure, as well as the total collapse of basic social services in practically all parts of the country and in all social and economic sectors. The assessment teams also encountered large numbers of injured persons, mostly children, consistent with the widespread use of child soldiers by the fighting forces. Many villages have been abandoned, as residents continue to hide in the bush to avoid being attacked or abused by armed groups.

50. The overall situation of internally displaced persons also constitutes a major area of concern in the present humanitarian context. In addition to the large numbers who took refuge in Monrovia, there are large concentrations of displaced persons in Harbel, on the Totota-Salala-Kakata axis, along the Gbarnga corridor, Buchanan and in Nimba County. Organizations of the United Nations system are working in unison to develop a comprehensive strategy for assisting the internally displaced and other categories of displaced persons. As a first step, an inter-agency committee for internally displaced persons jointly chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission was recently established to develop a relocation/resettlement strategy and monitor and supervise its implementation.

51. Under the overall leadership of the Deputy Special Representative responsible for humanitarian coordination, United Nations agencies formulated a Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal aimed at responding to the immediate needs of the Liberian population. The Appeal, which requests US$ 137 million to support the implementation of programmes in a cross-section of priority sectors, was launched in Ottawa on 19 November. Early donor contributions to the Appeal would help to stabilize the humanitarian situation and thereby pave the way for effective implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme and overall recovery efforts.

52. Meanwhile, preparations are ongoing for a reconstruction conference on Liberia in February 2004 to cater for the short- to medium-term reconstruction and development needs of the country. The conference, which will be held in New York, will be hosted jointly by the United Nations, the United States and the World Bank. Priority sectors have been identified and a needs assessment exercise has begun.

IX. Human rights and protection of civilians

53. The human rights situation in Liberia remains a major cause of concern. The ongoing skirmishes between the armed factions have been accompanied by attacks on civilians, often including deliberate killings, mutilations, rape, torture, arson, abduction and harassment, in addition to extortion, looting and the destruction of property. There have also been consistent reports of reprisal attacks and atrocities against ethnic Gio and Mano peoples in Nimba County by Krahn elements associated with MODEL. Entire villages in the area have been destroyed.

54. Information gathered during recent human rights assessment missions indicates that the extent of war-related violations and abuses of human rights and humanitarian law may have been underestimated. For example, a mission to Voinjama in Lofa County during October 2003 found the town almost deserted. The few people currently living there had moved in from neighbouring towns and villages with the occupying LURD forces; this is consistent with earlier reports of forced population movements.

55. In collaboration with non-governmental organizations and the United Nations country team, the human rights and protection component of UNMIL has been documenting cases of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including information on the perpetrators, victims and eyewitnesses. A central database has been designed for the systematic collation and storage of information from all monitors in the field, which will facilitate future action against impunity.

56. The assessment of the human rights situation and collection of information on abuses and violations have been complemented by efforts to strengthen the legal framework for protection. At the recommendation of the United Nations, on 8 October 2003, the Liberian Parliament ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the First Optional Protocol thereto, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. These instruments provide a solid basis for international review of the human rights situation in Liberia and future responses to gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law. UNMIL has already prepared a one-page information leaflet on the International Criminal Court, which will be widely disseminated among the various fighting forces, as a deterrent against continuing human rights violations and abuses.

57. On 29 October, UNMIL transmitted a draft "Human Rights Declaration" to the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia for his consideration. The draft declaration establishes guidelines, benchmarks and priorities for collaborative national action in the field of human rights. Furthermore, the UNMIL human rights component has worked with UNDP in designing a series of training programmes on human rights and humanitarian law for the personnel of national non-governmental organizations. The first such training, funded by the UNDP human rights and protection programme, was conducted for 71 participants on 10 and 11 November 2003, and covered human rights, humanitarian law, protection of internally displaced persons and vulnerable groups, as well as humanitarian assistance.

58. The Mission's human rights component is also providing pre-deployment training for peacekeepers and retraining of those already in the Mission area. It will also provide the necessary support to the Independent Expert of the Commission on Human Rights on Liberia during her forthcoming mission to Liberia.

X. Mission support

59. The rapid establishment of UNMIL, including the re-hatting of approximately 3,600 ECOMIL troops as United Nations peacekeepers, was a challenging task. Significant amounts of United Nations equipment were moved by air and sea from the strategic deployment stocks at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, and from several downsizing or liquidating missions. The established peacekeeping missions in the region, particularly UNAMSIL, also provided valuable assistance to the setting up of UNMIL. The establishment of UNMIL provided very useful lessons which will be employed to further develop the United Nations set of rapid deployment tools, including United Nations strategic deployment stocks, advance commitment authority and the rapid deployment team roster.

XI. Financial aspects

60. The Mission has been operating since 1 August 2003 under the commitment authority of $47,462,700 granted by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for the period from 1 August to 31 December 2003, and has received assets from the strategic deployment stocks at Brindisi. The budget for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004, which amounts to $564,614,300, is currently under review by the General Assembly.

XII. Observations

61. Despite formidable challenges, there has been an encouraging start to the efforts to re-establish security, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and promote the peace process in Liberia over the past three months. UNMIL has made considerable progress in consolidating stability in Monrovia and its surroundings. Notwithstanding the serious constraints arising from delays in the deployment of United Nations troops, the Mission has begun extending its influence beyond the capital through air and ground patrols to places as far flung as Zwedru, Harper, Greenville, Gbarnga, Robertsport, Buchanan and Tubmanburg. In addition, it has established effective liaison with both the political and military leadership of LURD, MODEL and former Government forces, and preparations for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation are progressing well.

62. The problems facing the country remain formidable. However, the smooth transfer of authority on 14 October from the interim Government led by President Moses Blah to the National Transitional Government of Liberia, led by Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant, augurs well for a successful transition that should lead to credible national elections in 2005. Now that the main mechanisms for the implementation of the peace process are in place, including the Transitional Government, the National Transitional Legislative Assembly, the Joint Monitoring Committee, the Implementation Monitoring Committee and the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation, all Liberian parties must work together and cooperate with international partners to ensure the effective functioning of these mechanisms. Nonetheless, despite considerable resource constraints, the Transitional Government and the Legislative Assembly have demonstrated a commendable determination to press ahead with the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

63. It is now essential to expedite the deployment of UNMIL beyond Monrovia and its surroundings in order to stabilize the situation in the interior, where skirmishes and serious human rights violations have continued since the signing of the Ceasefire and Comprehensive Peace Agreements. I would like to express my gratitude to the Member States that have so far contributed military and police personnel to UNMIL, and to appeal to those that have offered troops to expedite their deployment. I also wish to appeal to Member States to urgently make available the sorely needed specialized support units, in particular helicopter gunships and signals units, the deployment of which will be crucial for the effectiveness of UNMIL. The slow response from Member States to the Mission's troop requirements raises concern, not only for the effective implementation of the mandate of UNMIL, but also for planning for possible future peacekeeping operations in Africa, including in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and the Sudan. I must therefore stress that it is essential for Member States to make available in a timely fashion all the resources needed to enable peacekeeping operations to carry out the mandates given them by the Security Council.

64. In order to mobilize the resources needed to restore the infrastructure that would enable the National Transitional Government of Liberia to function effectively and to support the reintegration and repatriation of former combatants, the United Nations, the World Bank and the United States will jointly host a donors' conference on Liberia, which will be held in New York early in February 2004. In November 2003, the humanitarian agencies launched a consolidated appeal for $137 million to support the provision of emergency relief assistance as the interior of the country becomes accessible. I trust that Member States will contribute generously to both the consolidated appeal and the appeal that will be presented at the donors' conference in February.

65. It must be emphasized, however, that while the international community stands ready to assist Liberia in its quest for lasting peace, it is up to the National Transitional Government of Liberia, as well as the armed groups and other signatory parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to make that Agreement work and move the country towards the national elections in 2005. Regrettably, the armed groups have yet to demonstrate their full commitment to the peace process, as is apparent from the ongoing skirmishes, the continuing serious violations of human rights and the selfish pursuit of lucrative posts in the Government and public corporations. Those concerned must be warned that, if this attitude does not change, they may be held accountable for impeding the work of peacekeepers and for the ceasefire violations that have resulted in continuing human rights violations. The riots that broke out at the beginning of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process were particularly worrisome. They indicate the nature of the challenges that UNMIL can be expected to encounter in the initial stages of its deployment. It is also important to note that a number of local and international stakeholders continue to express concern about the capacity of former President Charles Taylor to interfere in the political process in Liberia.

66. As indicated in my previous reports, Liberia had been a main source of instability in neighbouring States, and the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire have been intricately linked to the situation in Liberia. While the deployment of UNMIL addresses what has been widely considered the epicentre of subregional instability, there is still a need for well-established mechanisms to address cross-cutting subregional issues. I have submitted a report to the Security

Council on these issues (S/2003/1147), pursuant to the recommendations of the mission recently dispatched by the Council to West Africa. In addition, I am pleased to note that all five United Nations field operations in the subregion (UNMIL, UNAMSIL, MINUCI, UNOGBIS and the United Nations Office for West Africa) have set in motion those interactions that should enable them to tackle subregional challenges in a coordinated manner.

67. In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to my Special Representative, Jacques Paul Klein, as well as to the civilian and military personnel of UNMIL for the contribution they are making in the efforts to restore lasting peace to Liberia. I also commend ECOWAS, the International Contact Group on Liberia, United Nations agencies and the humanitarian organizations that are performing critical work on the ground. Furthermore, I am grateful to the Standby High-Readiness Brigade for the effective support it provided in the setting up of UNMIL. The arrangements for the deployment of the interim force headquarters, comprising Brigade personnel, offered invaluable lessons that could be applied in future peacekeeping operations.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: contributions as at 12 December 2003

(Authorized military strength 15,000)

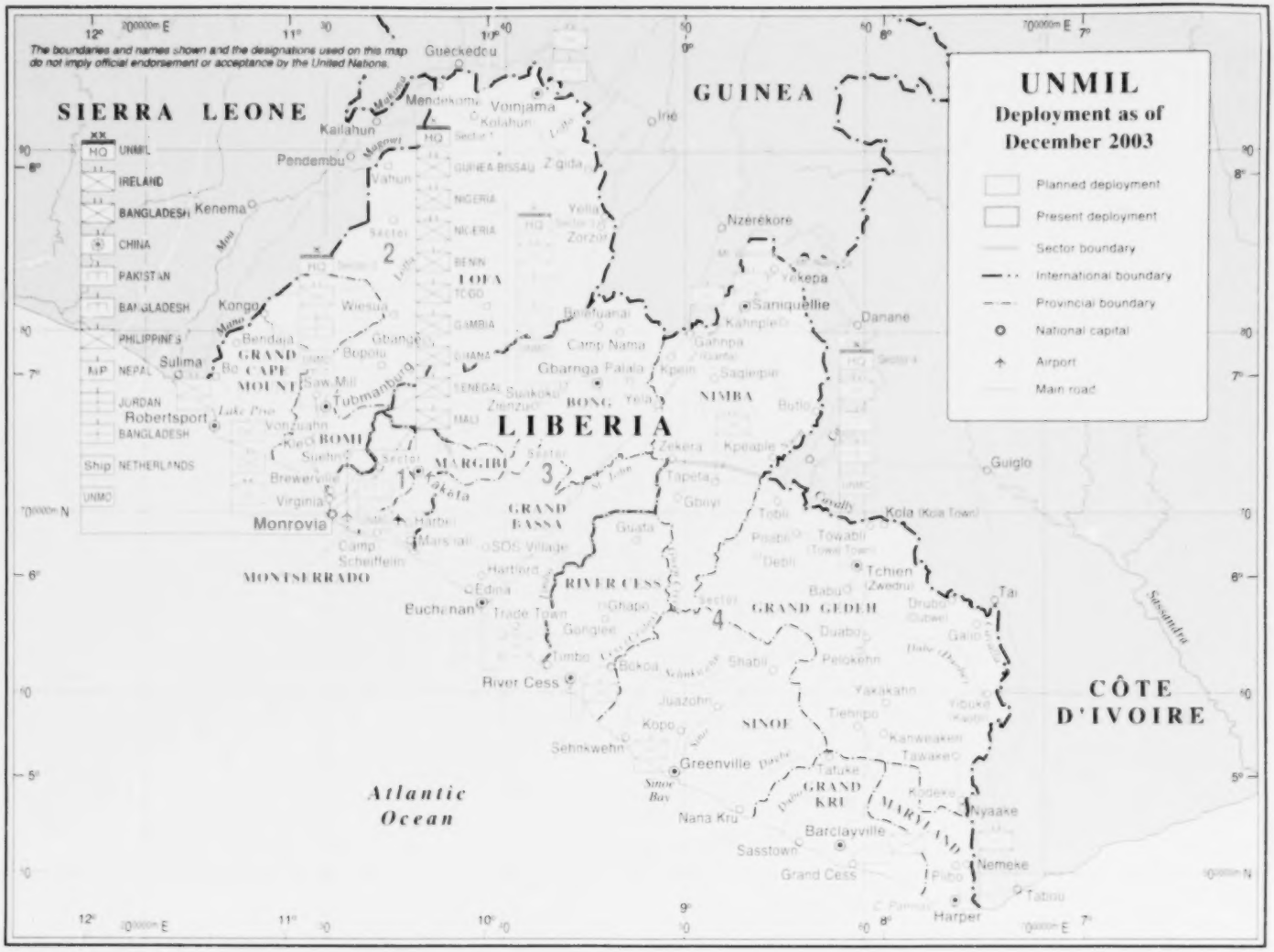
	Military observers	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*
Bangladesh	6	11	1 097	1 114
Benin	2		251	253
Bolivia	2	1		3
Brazil		1		1
China	3	9	66	78
Croatia		3		3
Czech Republic	2			2
Denmark	2			2
Ecuador	3	1		4
Ethiopia	4	10		14
Finland		1		1
France		1		1
Gambia			151	151
Ghana	6		257	263
Guinea-Bissau			650	650
Indonesia	3			3
Ireland		8	300	308
Jordan	3	9	113	125
Kenya	3	9		12
Malawi		2		2
Mali	2	3	247	252
Namibia	2	4		6
Nepal	2	1	40	43
Netherlands			270	270
Niger	2			2
Nigeria	1	17	1 584	1 602
Pakistan	4	5	264	273
Peru	3	2		5
Philippines	3	2	145	150
Poland	2			2
Republic of Korea	1	1		2
Republic of Moldova		1		1
Romania	3			3
Senegal		3	263	266
Serbia and Montenegro	2			2

	Military observers	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*
South Africa		2		2
Sweden		2		2
Togo	0	1	150	151
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		3		3
United States of America	7	2		9
Zambia	2			2
Total	**75**	**115**	**5 848**	**6 038**

Force Commander: Kenya; Civilian Police Commissioner: United States of America.

Civilian police: Bangladesh 2, China 5, Ghana 4, Jordan 4, Nepal 3, Norway 3, Sweden 4, Turkey 3, United States of America 1, Yemen 2, Zambia 3, Zimbabwe 4.

Total: 38 plus formed police unit: Jordan, 120.


The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
UNMIL
Deployment as of December 2003
Planned deployment
Present deployment
Sector boundary
International boundary
Provincial boundary
National capital
Airport
Main road
SIERRA LEONE
GUINEA
LIBERIA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
Atlantic Ocean
Monrovia
Robertsport
Buchanan
River Cess
Greenville
Harper
Zwedru
Kakata
Voinjama
Gbarnga
Kenema
Kailahun
Pendembu
Zorzor
Ganta
Saniquellie
Nzerekore
Danane
Tubmanburg
Bopolu
Sulima
Kongo
Bendaja
Vahun
Kolahun
Mendekoma
Gueckedou
Camp Nama
Sanniquellie
Tchien
Kola (Koa Town)
Guiglo
Tabou
Nyaake
Barclayville
Sasstown
Grand Cess
Nana Kru
Sehnkwehn
Juazohn
Kopo
Pelokehn
Yakakahn
Tiehnpo
Tatuke
Kanweakeh
Taakake
Duabo
Gbapo
Ghatpo
Trade Town
Ganglee
Timbo
Bokoa
Shabli
Edina
Hartford
SOS Village
Marshall
Harbel
Camp Scheiffelin
Virginia
Brewerville
Saw Mill
Suehn
Kiehn
Vonzuahn
Lake Piso
Gbange
Wiesua
Zuanzon
Suakoko
Yeiyea
Zekera
Kpeaple
Tapeta
Gbiyi
Tobli
Pisabi
Towabli
Debli
Babu
Drubo
Galo
Dube
Dubwel
Kidoke
Nyaake
Tiabli
Pleebo
Pynes Town
Fish Town
Sasstown
Sinoe Bay
Sinoe River
Cavalla
Sassandra
Mano
Lofa
Gbarnga Palala
Camp Nama
Kpein
Saqiepie
Butlo
Gahnpa
Kahnple
Yekepa
Zorzor
Zigida
Yelle
Irie
Lofa
Mano
Mogovi
Mafa
Lake
Luffa
Kpelle
Loma
Vai
Bassa
Grebo
Kru
Krahn
Gio
Mano
Mandingo
Mende
Gola
Kissi
Vai
Bella
Fula
Limba
Temne
Susu
Yalunka
Kuranko
Koranko
Loko
Kono
Mandingo
Fula
Susu
Yalunka
Kuranko
Koranko
Loko
Kono
Mende
Gola
Kissi
Vai
Bella
Limba
Temne